Abstract of the Invention

A system for optimizing the value of communications between communicating parties is provided. The system includes a communication group manager that facilitates specifying policies, preferences and/or automated analysis of ideal communication channels, routing and/or scheduling in terms of communicating party groups that can be pre-populated clusters of communicating parties, assembled based on relationships (*e.g.*, organizational), and/or assembled based on satisfying inclusion criteria (*e.g.*, age, location, competence, communication history, meeting history). The communication group manager maps communicating parties into predefined and/or dynamically created groups that facilitate specifying and/or automatically computing ideal communication actions like selecting a channel, displaying lists of potential channels sorted by communicating party preferences, and (re)scheduling communications to different channels and/or times. Ideal communication actions can be identified by maximizing a measure of expected communication utility, where groups provide simplifying abstractions to facilitate assessment of outcome utilities. The method can employ representations of preferences of the contactor and contactee that allow for group-specific preference considerations that weight differentially contactor and/or contactee preference considerations in communication action optimization . The system includes a group wise communication coordinator that identifies optimal group communication sets. The method facilitates a recipient communicating with a group member where the communication utility is optimized based on a preference, and a context associated with the group to which the member belongs.